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LETTER DATED 6 JANUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KUWAIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its eighteenth session, held in Kuwait from 20 to 22 December 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad A. ABULHASAN
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its eighteenth session, held in Kuwait from 20 to 22 December 1997

At the invitation of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait, the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its eighteenth session in Kuwait from 20 to 22 December 1997 under the chairmanship of His Highness the Amir. The meeting was attended by:

His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates;

His Highness Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, Amir of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard of Saudi Arabia;

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said of Oman; and

His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani, Amir of Qatar.

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim al-Hegelan, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, also participated in the meeting.

The Supreme Council reviewed the progress made in cooperation and joint action in the political, security, military, economic, social and legal fields since its seventeenth session. It considered the reports and recommendations submitted by the GCC Ministerial Committees and the Ministerial Council, and it affirmed its sincere desire to promote the worthy goals enshrined in the GCC Statute and to make further progress on a wider and more comprehensive scale in order to keep pace with changes at the regional and international levels and meet the aspirations of the GCC member States and their peoples for security, stability and prosperity in the region.

Progress made in cooperation

Advisory Board of the Supreme Council

In its desire to strengthen the role of the citizen in promoting GCC activities, the Supreme Council decided to establish an Advisory Board consisting of citizens of member States having the necessary expertise and competence in order to provide advice on matters referred to it by the Council.

Military matters

In the military field, the Council approved the decisions taken by the ministers of defence at their sixteenth meeting, held in Doha, and in particular those relating to practical steps to establish a secure military communications

network among member States, to radar coverage and early warning systems and to military exercises.

The Council expressed its satisfaction at the progress made in military cooperation in all fields and stressed the importance of continuing to implement all aspects of military cooperation and of increasing the efficiency of the collective defence capability of member States with a view to promoting their unity of purpose and their common affiliation and destiny.

Security matters

With regard to security issues, the Council endorsed the decisions taken by the ministers of the interior at their sixteenth meeting, including those relating to the easing of formalities for the movement of citizens and the flow of goods and trade among member States. These included, most significantly, a decision to issue machine-readable passports to citizens of member States within a maximum of two years so as to dispense with the need for citizens to complete entry and exit cards in those countries in which they are still in use and the decision to improve services at overland crossing-points by increasing the productivity of personnel and the use of the most advanced equipment.

Economic matters

The Council reviewed the reports and conclusions of the meetings of the Ministerial Committees concerning progress made in economic cooperation between member States.

In the context of the formation of a customs union among the GCC States and the completion of the procedures necessary for the establishment of a unified customs tariff vis-à-vis the outside world, the Council took note of the agreements reached in the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation and expressed satisfaction at the progress made in the classification of goods. It gave instructions for procedures for the establishment of the customs union to be carried through, including the proposed unification of duties on scheduled goods, and approved the date of entry into force of the unified customs tariff for member States.

Stressing the importance of cooperation and linkage among member States in the field of banking and of the strengthening of that sector, the Council decided to permit national banks in member States to open branches in other member States subject to the relevant controls. It also decided to permit the Gulf International Bank to open branches in member States.

Emphasizing the linked economic interests of member States and the importance of the coordination of their infrastructure projects, the Council gave instructions for implementation to begin on phase I of the electricity linkage project and agreed that it should be owned and operated by an independent body run on commercial principles.

Further to the steps taken by member States to update their economic regulations as they relate to the encouragement of investment and in order to attract private-sector investment both at home and from abroad, the Supreme

Council authorized the Ministerial Council to adopt a model law for the encouragement of foreign investment in member States. It assessed the economic situation in member States and expressed satisfaction at the flourishing state of their economies. It commended the investments made by the private sector in all economic sectors and activities.

The Council further took note of the paper presented by Kuwait on the strategic aspects of the development and economic integration of GCC member States and of the positive concepts and basic elements set forth therein for a strategy for the medium- and long-term economic development of member States. It decided to refer the paper to the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation for consideration.

Legal affairs

The Council approved the GCC Unified Civil Code (known as the Kuwait document) and the GCC Unified Criminal Code (known as the Doha document), which are derived from Islamic law. Both are model codes that contribute to the unification of the legal systems of member States.

Man and the environment

The Supreme Council reviewed the recommendations of the Ministerial Council on cooperation in matters relating to man and the environment.

The Council appreciates the steps being taken to fill posts with nationals of member States and to facilitate the movement of national manpower among GCC States. It affirms the importance of pursuing population policies that will ensure the homogeneity, stability and security of the peoples of member States.

In the field of environmental protection, the Supreme Council approved three ordinances: on the conservation and promotion of nature; on the handling of radioactive substances; and on waste management and the procedures to be followed in the movement of hazardous waste between member States in accordance with the international regulations on such matters that represent a minimum in terms of requirements for protection.

Following the decision taken by the ministers of the interior at their sixteenth meeting, the Council decided to approve the mechanisms and procedures for facilitating movements and exchanges of members between agricultural centres in member States.

Political affairs

Implementation by Iraq of the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait

The Council discussed progress made in the implementation by Iraq of the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait. It stressed that the Iraqi Government must implement all of the relevant Security Council resolutions without selectivity, especially those relating to the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction still in Iraq's possession, the

release of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners, the return of all Kuwaiti property and the requirement to refrain from hostile or provocative acts against neighbouring States in compliance with Security Council resolution 949 (1994).

The Council affirms that Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait were a violation of the inter-Arab and international covenants and of the international rule of law. It is therefore incumbent on Iraq to acknowledge that it violated the Pact of the League of Arab States and the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty between the States of the Arab League, as well as the Charter of the United Nations, when it occupied the State of Kuwait. The Council calls upon Iraq to take the necessary steps to demonstrate its peaceful intentions towards Kuwait and the States of the region by word and deed so as to spare the region the calamities that would arise from any repetition of such a catastrophe and ensure the security and stability of all the States of the region.

The Council expressed deep concern at the dangerous escalation caused by the tense situation between Iraq and the United Nations resulting from the continued concealment by the Iraqi Government of dangerous and deadly biological and chemical weapons that threaten the lives of the fraternal Iraqi people and the other peoples of the region. In this connection, the Council commended the cohesion of the international position, as represented by that of the Security Council, with regard to the recent escalation. It reaffirmed its support for the Special Commission charged with eliminating Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and for its Executive Chairman in the context of the implementation of their mandate, and it renewed its call to the Iraqi Government to cooperate fully with the Special Commission without restrictions or conditions. The Council emphasized that Iraq must implement all of the relevant Security Council resolutions in order to bring about a mitigation of the sanctions and alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people. The GCC member States are sympathetic to that suffering, and they welcomed in that connection the oil-for-food formula under which food and medical requirements are provided to the fraternal Iraqi people. They have similarly welcomed every initiative for the mitigation of their suffering.

The Council has been following the recent developments in the situation in northern Iraq, and it has expressed concern at the possible repercussions of those developments for the region. It reaffirmed its constant position that the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq must be preserved.

The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, and relations with Iran

(a) The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates

The Council considered developments in the situation with respect to the Greater Tub, the Lesser Tub and Abu Musa, islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates. It reaffirmed its great sadness at the Islamic Republic of Iran's continued refusal to respond to the earnest and sincere appeals made to it by the United Arab Emirates and by regional and international organizations for a peaceful settlement to the dispute.

The Council also reviewed the statements by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Mohamad Khatemi, in which he expressed his desire to meet with the President of the United Arab Emirates, His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and it heard His Highness welcome this approach. The Council welcomed any meeting between the leaders of the two countries.

Reaffirming the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the three islands and its unconditional support for all the peaceful measures it is taking to re-establish its sovereignty over them, the Council again urges the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the islands, to desist from its policy of imposing faits accomplis, to refrain from building any further installations there with a view to changing the demographic composition of the islands, to rescind all unilateral measures taken in the past and remove all of the installations built, and to resolve the present dispute by peaceful means in accordance with the principles and rules of international law, including agreement to refer the issue to the International Court of Justice.

(b) Relations with Iran

The Council discussed developments in connection with relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in accordance with the established positions of its member States with regard to the promotion of good relations with it based on good-neighbourliness, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and in the light of the positive statements made by Iranian leaders concerning the intentions of the Government of Iran to endeavour to turn a new page in relations with GCC member States. It expressed the hope that the coming period would witness a positive and concrete evolution in relations between the two sides with a view to building mutual confidence and placing relations on a firm foundation so as to achieve security and stability in the region.

The peace process in the Middle East

The Council considered the peace process in the Middle East and its suspension as a result of the Israeli Government's failure to discharge the obligations imposed on it by the interim agreements concluded with the Palestinians and of the adoption of unilateral measures that pre-empt the final-status negotiations. These measures include the building and expansion of settlements, the expropriation of Palestinian land, the imposition of an economic embargo on Palestinian citizens and the curtailment of opportunities for economic development in the Palestinian territory, all of which are incompatible with the spirit of the peace process, the principles on which it was based and the provisions of the agreements concluded within its framework.

The Council expresses its unconditional rejection of such policies and practices on the part of the Israeli Government, and it urges it to discharge all of its obligations under the agreements concluded with the Palestine Liberation Organization and, primarily, to carry out the redeployment in the West Bank in all its stages and begin the final-status negotiations with the Palestinians. This will bring about a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 and will enable the Palestinian people

to exercise all of its legitimate national rights, including the right to establish an independent State on its national soil with its capital at Jerusalem. The Council further urges the Israeli Government to resume negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks from the point reached in the previous rounds. It calls for Israel's complete withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the boundary line of 4 June 1967 in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), for its complete withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa, and for all occupied Lebanese territory to be restored to Lebanese sovereignty in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

The Council appreciates the efforts made by the United States Administration in support of the peace process in the Middle East, as well as those of the Russian Federation, and it calls upon the co-sponsors to maintain and strengthen their role in promoting the resumption of the negotiations on all tracks and the restoration of the peace process to its normal and proper course.

The Council commends the international consensus in support of the maintenance of the peace process in the Middle East, of the need to fulfil existing commitments and of the resumption of negotiations on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace with a view to achieving a just and comprehensive peace. In this connection, the Council appreciates the efforts made by the European Union and its member States and the political and economic support they provide to the Palestinian National Authority.

Elimination of weapons of mass destruction

The Council expressed concern at the persistence of programmes for weapons of mass destruction in the region and called for action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council affirmed that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all of its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

Extremism, violence and terrorism

The Council affirms once more that extremism, violence and terrorism are global phenomena that are not restricted to any particular people or region, and it reaffirms its condemnation of such phenomena and its categorical rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism from whatever source they may come. The Council expressed its regret that certain States had sheltered extremist terrorist elements on grounds of protecting human rights, and it calls upon those States to distinguish between such rights and the devastating terrorist actions and practices in which these elements engage and which threaten the security and integrity of States and place their citizens and residents in the greatest jeopardy. It further urges these States to endeavour to prevent such elements and extremist and terrorist groups from using their territory and exploiting their laws in order to obtain funding and weapons and from engaging in any other activities that threaten the security and integrity of States, and it calls for the conclusion of an international convention to combat terrorism.

The Council further rejects and condemns the interference of the European Parliament and other bodies in judicial matters and in the administration of justice in GCC member States, and it regards this as unacceptable interference in their internal affairs that may encourage the perpetration of crimes and terrorist actions and thus have an adverse impact on security and stability in the region.

In concluding its work, the Council welcomed the decision of the Eighth Islamic Summit Conference, held in Tehran from 9 to 11 December 1997, that Qatar should host the Ninth Summit, to be held in Doha in the year 2000.

The Council expressed its deep appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait, and to the Government and people of Kuwait for their warm welcome, generous hospitality and sincere fraternal sentiments, commending the arrangements made to host the meeting.

The leaders of the GCC member States also commended the major role played by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait and Chairman of the Supreme Council's current session, in the conduct of the meetings held. This had the greatest impact in ensuring that important decisions and conclusions were reached in the endeavour to fulfil the aspirations of the peoples of the GCC States.

The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting, God willing, at its nineteenth session, to be held in the United Arab Emirates in December 1998 at the kind invitation of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates.